MR. GASTON'S ADDRESS

Delivered before the Philanthropic and Dialectic Societies at Chapel-Hill, on the 20th of June, 1832.

Gentlemen of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies:

When I look around on this extraordinary concourse of visitors, I cannot but feel that expectation has been too highly excited, and cannot but anticipate and regret the disappointment which it must necessarily meet with. Aware of the value which is here set upon the ceremony of the annual address; knowing that the friends of the University throughout the State, regard it as calculated not only to excite a spirit of emulation among the Students, but to attract the public attention to the Institution itself; and warmly attached to that noble cause, for the advancement of which, these edifices have been erected and your associations formed, I felt myself bound to accept of the invitation, in obedience to which I appear before you. Could I indeed have foreseen the unusual engagements, which added to the ordinary occupations of a busy life, have left me no leisure to prepare any thing worthy of the general expectation, I should have deemed myself at liberty to decline the call. But the discovery was not made until after my word was pledged, and it was too late to hope that the duty could be devolved on another. Compelled then to choose between an entire disappointment of your hopes, and the presenting myself to you without the advantages of full preparation, I have resolved to execute the undertaking imperfectly, rather than forego it altogether. To whatever petty mortifications the adoption of this alternative may expose me elsewhere, from you, my young friends, I am sure of a favourable reception. You will see in it an expression of the sense which I entertain of the honor conferred on me, by your choice, of my readiness to gratify your wishes, and of my solicitude to cheer you on in the noble career on which you have entered. The few homely truths which I wish to impress upon your minds, will not indeed come mended from my tongue, but I do not despair that, presented in their naked plainness, but urged with the earnestness and sincerity of friendship, they may win their way to your generous and affectionate approbation.

The authority of Shakespeare is often invoked for the position, that "there is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune." Without venturing to deny altogether

the fitness of this metaphor, and fully admitting it to have enough of truth to render it appropriate to the occasion for which it was used, and the character to whom the great poet assigned it, I yet regard it as too favourable to that indolence of disposition which is always ready to imagine success in life as depending on some fortunate tide. I hold, that generally, every man is the architect of his own fortune, the author of his own greatness or insignificance, happiness or misery. True it is, that casualties, neither to be foreseen nor prevented, may defeat schemes which have been wisely concerted and vigorously prosecuted; and that success, undeserved, and perhaps unsought for, may sometimes befal the weak and slothful. These, however, are but occasional deviations from the ordinary course of nature, according to which man's energies, wisely or foolishly directed, and diligently or carelessly exerted, are made to determine his character and condition in society. The stoutest ship that was ever manned with prudent heads, brave hearts, and strong hands, has foundered in a hurricane, while the feeble bark that "owns no mastery in floating," is sometimes safely wafted into port; yet, who can deny that ordinarily the fate of the voyage must depend on the skill, care and courage with which it is conducted.

Much too, very much, either for permanent good or ill in the fate of every individual, has been found to follow almost necessarily from the habits formed, the propensities cherished or restrained, and the rules of conduct adopted at a very early period of life. We might, perhaps, be tempted to regret that such important and often awful consequences should follow on the doings of an age, when the unworn senses are alive to every impression, and the keen appetite greedy for every enjoyment; when the imagination is wild, the judgment feeble, and "heedless rambling impulse" has scarcely learned to think. Yet such is the constitution of nature, and such consequently the appointment of HIM, whose ways are always wise, benevolent and just, and whose will it were not more madness to resist, than it is impiety to question. Look through the world, and the least observant cannot fail to discover talents abused, opportunities squandered, and men ruined, because of early folly, misbehaviour or thoughtlessness; and let those who have passed through life's ordeal with safety and honor, look back on their trials, and they will acknowledge how much they owe to very early impressions, and to habits contracted almost without a sense of their use or a foresight of their consequences. He therefore, who aspires to excellence, cannot too soon propose to himself the objects which he should strive to obtain, nor fix his aim too early, or too steadily, on the end to which his efforts should be directed. The shortness of life, the large fragments of it which are

necessarily occupied by animal wants, or wasted in frivolous cares and amusements, leave, at best, but an inconsiderable portion to be devoted to intellectual cultivation and exertion. To waste this portion would be criminal improvidence, and it is of the highest moment to learn betimes how it may be most beneficially applied.

The end which an ingenuous youth naturally proposes to himself is, a faithful and honorable discharge of the duties of life. His objects are to realize the fond hopes of his parents and friends, to acquire the affection and esteem of those around him, to become the dispenser of good to his fellow-men, and thus to fulfil the purposes for which it has pleased God to place him in this world of trial and discipline. He feels that these objects are indeed good. By a moral instinct, he is propelled towards them as fit to fill his heart, kindle his aspirations and animate his exertions. Reason, as she gradually unfolds her powers and assumes dominion over him, sanctions this choice with her approbation; and Religion comes in aid of Nature and Reason, to teach him that talents are but lent to be improved, and that an account must be one day rendered, in which their use or neglect will be amply rewarded or severely punished. How much is it not to be lamented, that sloth should enervate, dissipation corrupt, or vice brutalize, this child of hope and promise. You who have him in charge, watch over him with never sleeping vigilance and affectionate solicitude. Give him a happy start, sustain him when disposed to flag, reanimate him when discouraged, check kindly his wanderings, soothe his wounded feelings, guide him with your counsels, and save him from the foes by which he is waylaid and beset.

Macte nova virtute puer sic itur ad astra.

Most faithfully, no doubt, are these duties performed by the able and excellent men who are here charged with the office of instruction. Little can be done in aid of their efforts, but to exhort and entreat all placed under their care to attend to their admonitions, treasure up their counsels, and obey their injunctions. Yet there are some errors which were prevalent when I was a boy, which I have reason to believe still prevail in public schools, and which may perhaps be better handled by an old friend than an acknowledged instructor—and to these, therefore, I would for a few moments request the favorable attention of the younger portion of my hearers.

Vigorous, diligent and persevering application is essential to the attainment of excellence in every pursuit of man. It is undoubtedly a mistake to suppose, that there is no original inequality in the mental faculties of different individuals. Probably, there is as great a disparity in their intellectual, as in their physical conformation. But however false this extravagant theory may be, there

is another error far more common, and practically, far more mischievous—the error of exaggerating the difference between the original energies of intellect, and of attributing to splendid and resistless genius those victories which are not to be achieved but by well directed and continued industry. It is in the infancy of life, that the inequalities of original talent are most striking, and it is not strange, that vanity on the one hand, and indolent admiration on the other, should hyperbolically extol these obvious advantages. In what this disparity consists, it may not be easy to state with precision. But from an observation of many years, I venture to suggest, that the chief natural superiority manifested by the favored few over their competitors in the intellectual conflict, is to be found in the facility with which their attention is directed and confined to its proper subjects. That youth may be regarded as fortunate indeed, who in early life can restrain his wandering thoughts and tie down his mind at will, to the contemplation of whatever he wishes to comprehend and to make his own. A few moments of this concentrated application, is worth days and weeks of a vague, interrupted, scattered attention. The first resembles the well known manœuvre in Strategy, so simple in its conception and yet so astonishing in its results, by which all the arms of a military force are made to bear upon a given point at the same moment. Every thing here tells, because there is no power wasted, and none misapplied. Now let no one despair, because he finds this effort to confine his attention difficult, or for a considerable length of time, impracticable. Nothing is more certain, than that this power over the mind may be acquired. Let the attempt be repeated again and again—first for short, afterwards, as the ability is increased, for longer periods, and success will ultimately follow.—The habit of fixed attention will thus be created, and it is one of the peculiarities of all active habits, that in proportion to the difficulty with which they were produced, is their inveteracy, when once thoroughly formed. Thus it not unfrequently happens, that the advantages with which the individual commenced his career, who was naturally alert and devoted in his attention to every subject, as it was successively presented to his notice, have not enabled him to contend successfully with him, who, by hard efforts, has chained down his wandering thoughts and dissipated faculties to the habit of attention. Among the best results which attend a course of regular academical education, is this exclusive and concentrated direction of the mental powers to their appropriate objects. In the years employed principally in the study of the learned languages, the necessity of finding out the meaning of each word, and discerning either the agreement between different words, or the dependance of some of them upon others in certain

grammatical relations, necessarily sharpens and fixes the attention. After this preparatory discipline of the intellect, the Student is introduced to the study of mathematical science, where proposition leads on to proposition in regular order, and his attention is necessarily enchained to each truth, as it follows, with logical certainty, from truths previously demonstrated. He is then initiated into the mysterious laws of Natural Philosophy, as they have been discovered, explained and illustrated by a course of rigorous induction, and is ultimately familiarized with the yet nobler and more sublime investigations of moral science, the refinements of taste, the beauties of eloquence and the charms of heavenly poesy. And this admirable training, is conducted remote from the bustle and cares of the world, in the very hush of the passions, and beyond the reach of beguiling and distracting pleasures. Here surely, then, the understanding is disciplined, its discrimination rendered more acute, its general health and vigor confirmed, while a facility is created for directing its powers to the various manly and trying services which may await it, in life's busy theatre.—But not unfrequently is the question asked by querelous Students, why all this devoted attention to the dead languages, to mathematical theorems, philosophical experiments, metaphysical disquisitions and critical subtleties? In the world, no one talks Greek or Latin, and at the forum, or in the Legislative hall, we shall not be called upon to demonstrate the propositions of Euclid, or explain the phenomena of hydrostatics and optics. The motives of human action are better learned in that great practical school, the world, than by poring over the theories of metaphysicians; and all the rules of Quinctillian, Rollin or Blair, will never make a powerful reasoner or an eloquent orator. Why, then, shall we consume our nights and days in the acquisition of that which is to be of no practical utility hereafter, and which brings with it no immediate advantage, except the gratification of pride, a short-lived honor, a distinction at Commencement? Beware, my young friends, beware of the tempter. These are the suggestions of Sloth—the most insidious, persuasive and dangerous of deceivers.

"*Vitanda est improba syren Desidia.*"

If you cannot close your ears against her insinuations, strengthen your understandings to triumph over her sophisms, and nerve your courage to resist her wiles. Be sure, if you submit to her benumbing influence, and waste your days here in idleness, the time will come, when with bitter, but perhaps unavailing anguish, you shall bemoan your folly. Remember, that it is not designed by an academical education, to teach you all that it behoves you to learn—Education is not completed within these walls. When you shall

have quitted this peaceful retreat, and selected the profession or state in life in which you are to be engaged, then you should apply all your efforts to the acquisition of that species of knowledge which is more especially needed. Here are inculcated those elementary principles of science and literature, which experience has shewn to be best fitted to form the foundation of the character of the scholar and gentleman—those rudiments of instruction, which omitted here, are rarely indeed acquired afterwards. Here are to be formed those habits of vigorous and continuous application—here, the capacities for improvement are to be cultivated and strengthened, so that every occasion and every employment without these walls may become subsidiary to further advancement in knowledge, ability and usefulnesss. It is a miserable fallacy, to mistake the exception for the rule. True it is, that those who have won the highest honours at College, do not always realize the hopes which these glorious beginnings have excited. "The fair bloom of fairest fruit" may be be blasted by pestilent dews. Folly, vanity and vice, low pursuits and vulgar associations, indolence, intemperance and debauchery, but too often debase and destroy the generous youth who entered on life's career, rich in academical distinctions, docile, ardent for fame, patient of labour, of manly purpose and noblest promise. Mourn over these moral wrecks. Lament the instability of all earthly good, the frail character of all human excellence. Weep for those who have fallen from their high estate, but say not it was folly in them thus to have risen. True it is also, that it sometimes, though very rarely happens, that those who have been idle during their academical course, have, by extraordinary exertions, retrieved their early neglect, and in the end, outstripped others who started in the race far ahead. These are the exceptions—they furnish cause to humble arrogance, check presumption, banish despair, and encourage reformation. But so surely as a virtuous life usually precedes a happy death, so surely it will be found, that within the College precincts, is laid the groundwork of that pre-eminence afterward acquired in the strife of men, and that College distinctions are not only good testimony of the fidelity with which College duties have been performed, but the best presages and pledges of excellence on a more elevated and extensive field of action. In defiance, therefore, of all the lures of pleasure, and seductive suggestions of sloth, let active, persevering industry, be the habit of your lives. Form this habit here, and cherish and preserve it ever afterwards.

But however earnestly you are thus exhorted to diligence, let it not be forgotten, that diligence itself is but a subordinate quality, and derives its chief value from the end to which it is directed, and the motives by which it is impelled. It is diligence in a good

cause only that is commendable. The first great maxim of human conduct, that which it is all-important to impress on the understandings of young men, and recommend to their hearty adoption, is, above all things, in all circumstances, and under every emergency, to preserve a clean heart and an honest purpose. Integrity, firm, determined integrity, is that quality, which of all others, raises man to the highest dignity of his nature, and fits him to adorn and bless the sphere in which he is appointed to move. Without it, neither genius nor learning, neither the gifts of God, nor human exertions, can avail aught for the accomplishment of the great objects of human existence. Integrity is the crowning virtue—integrity is the pervading principle which ought to regulate, guide, control and vivify every impulse, desire and action. Honesty is sometimes spoken of as a vulgar virtue; and perhaps that honesty, which barely refrains from outraging the positive rules ordained by society for the protection of property, and which ordinarily pays its debts and performs its engagements, however useful and commendable a quality, is not to be numbered among the highest efforts of human virtue. But that integrity which, however tempting the opportunity, or however secure against detection, no selfishness nor resentment, no lust of power, place, favour, profit or pleasure, can cause to swerve from the strict rule of right, is the perfection of man's moral nature. In this sense, the poet was right, when he pronounced "an honest man the noblest work of God." It is almost inconceivable what an erect and independent spirit this high endowment communicates to the man, and what a moral intrepidity and vivifying energy it imparts to his character. There is a family alliance between all the virtues, and perfect integrity is always followed by a train of goodly qualities, frankness, benevolence, humanity, patriotism, promptness to act, and patience to endure. In moments of public need, these indicate the man who is worthy of universal confidence. Erected on such a basis, and built up of such materials, fame is enduring. Such is the fame of our WASHINGTON, of the man "inflexible to ill and obstinately just." While, therefore, other monuments, intended to perpetuate human greatness, are daily mouldering into dust, and belie the proud inscriptions which they bear, the solid granite pyramid of his glory lasts from age to age, imperishable, seen afar off, looming high over the vast desert, a mark, a sign and a wonder, for the way-farers through this pilgrimage of life.

A nice sense of integrity cannot, therefore, be too early cherished, or too sedulously cultivated. In the very dawnings of life, occasions are presented for its exercise. Within these walls, temptations every day occur, where temporary advantage solicits a deviation from the rule of right. In the discharge of the various

duties which you owe to your companions, let no petty selfishness be indulged, no artifices practised, by which you are to escape from your fair share of labour, inconvenience or contribution, or any one deprived of the full measure of whatever he may rightfully claim. Cultivate singleness of purpose and frankness of demeanor, and hold in contempt whatever is sordid, disingenuous, cunning or mean. But it is when these peaceful shades shall have been left behind, and the fitful course of busy life begun, that seductions will be presented under every form by which inexperience, infirmity of purpose, and facility of disposition, can be waylaid. Then is the crisis of the young man's fate—then is the time to take his stand, to seize his vantage ground. If he can then defy the allurements of cupidity, sensuality and ambition, the laugh of fools, the arts of parasites, and the contagion of improbity; then indeed, may he hope,

> "In sight of mortal and immortal powers,
> "As in a boundless theatre to run
> "The great career of justice—
> "And through the mists of passion and of sense,
> "And through the tossing tide of chance and pain
> "To hold his course unfaultering."

You, my young friends, who are standing at the threshold, and waiting with eager impatience the signal for entrance upon life, must not think that I mean to alarm you with idle fears, because I thus warn you of the approaching conflict. The enraged bull may close his eyes before he rushes upon his foe, but rational courage, calmly surveys danger, and then deliberately prepares and determines to encounter it. Apprized of your peril, and armed for the encounter, enter on your course with resolved hearts, and fear not for the issue.

So sweet are the notes of human praise, and so abhorrent the tones of reproach, that it is among the highest efforts of magnanimity to pursue the straight forward course of duty without being turned aside by commendation or reproof, by flattery or calumny. Whatever be our journey through life, like the princes in the Eastern tale ascending the mountain in search of the wondrous bird, we are sure to hear around us the confused sounds of blandishment and solicitation, of menace and insult, until with many of us, the giddy head is turned, and we are converted into monuments of warning to those who are to follow us in life's adventure. Rare indeed is that moral courage, which, like the prudent Parisade, closes its ears against the impression of these sounds, and casts not an eye behind until its destined course be accomplished. Rare, however, as may be this excellence, and in its perfection perhaps

unattainable, there can be no true dignity and decision of character without a near approach to it. Let youth be ever modest, ever deferential to the counsels, the suggestions and the claims of others. But in matters of right and wrong, whatever be the lures, the taunts, or the usages of the world, or whatever the supposed inconveniences of singularity, let judgment and conscience always rule with absolute sway. Carry this maxim with you through life, whatever be the station you are to occupy, or the business you are to pursue; and carry with it another kindred maxim, rely for success in your undertakings, not on the patronage of others, but on your own capacity, resolution, diligence and exertions. Rise by merit, or rise not at all. Suited as these injunctions are believed to be to all, they are peculiarly addressed to those among you, who, panting for renown, are resolved to enter upon a public career, and long "to read their history in a nation's eyes."

"How wretched," exclaims the Poet of Nature, "is that poor man who hangs on Princes' favours." Miserable is the condition of every being who hangs on the favours of creatures like himself. Deserve, and strive by desert, to win the esteem of your fellow-men. Thus acquired, it decorates him who obtains, and blesses those who bestow it. To them, it is returned in faithful service, and to him, it comes in aid of the approbation of conscience to animate diligence and reward exertion. Those too, who engage in public service, are bound to cherish a hearty sympathy with the wants, feelings, comforts and wishes of the people whose welfare is committed to their charge. It is essential for the preservation of that confidence which ought to subsist between the principal and the agent, the constituent and the representative, that all haughtiness and reserve should be banished from their intercourse. It sometimes happens, that he who has lived too constantly among books, manifests a disgust in an association with the uneducated and unrefined, which mortifies and repels them. This is absurd in him, and unjust to them. It is absurd, for he ought to know, and know well, those for whom, and upon whom, he expects to act—they constitute, in fact, one of the first and most appropriate objects of his study; and it is unjust, for not unfrequently, under this roughness which shocks the man of books, is to be found a stock of practical information, in which he is miserably deficient. Banish, then, all superciliousness, for it is criminal and ridiculous. Honestly seek to serve your country, for it is glorious to advance the good of your fellow-men, and thus, as far as feeble mortals may, act up to the great example of HIM to whose image and likeness you are made. Seek also, by all honest arts, to win their confidence, but beware how you ever prefer their favour to their service. The high road of service is indeed laborious, exposed to the

rain and sun, the heat and dust; while the by-path of favour has, apparently, at first, much the same direction, and is bordered with flowers and sheltered by trees, "cooled with fountains and murmuring with water-falls." No wonder, then, that like the son of Abensina, in Johnson's beautiful Apologue, the young adventurer is tempted to try the happy experiment of uniting pleasure with business, and gaining the rewards of diligence without suffering its fatigues. But once entered upon, the path of favour, though found to decline more and more from its first direction, is pursued through all its deviations, till at length, even the thought of return to the road of service is utterly abandoned. To court the fondness of the people, is found, or supposed to be, easier than to merit their approbation. Meanly ambitious of public trust, without the virtues to deserve it; intent on personal distinction, and having forgotten the ends for which alone it is worth possessing, the miserable being concentered all in self, learns to pander to every vulgar prejudice, to advocate every popular error, to chime in with every dominant party, to fawn, flatter and deceive, and becomes a demagogue. How wretched is that poor being who hangs on the people's favour! All manliness of principle has been lost in this long course of meanness; he dare not use his temporary popularity for any purposes of public good, in which there may be a hazard of forfeiting it; and the very eminence to which he is exalted, renders but more conspicuous his servility and degradation. However clear the convictions of his judgment, however strong the admonitions of his, as yet, not thoroughly stifled conscience, not these, not the law of God, nor the rule of right, nor the public good—but the caprice of his constituents, must be his only guide. Having risen by artifice, and conscious of no worth to support him, he is in hourly dread of being supplanted in the favour of the deluded multitude by some more cunning deceiver. And such, sooner or later, is sure to be his fate. At some unlucky moment, when he bears his blushing honours thick upon him, (and well may such honours blush!) he is jirked from his elevation by some more dexterous demagogue, and falls unpitied, never to rise again. And can this be the lot of him who has been here trained to admire and love high-minded excellence—who has been taught by high classical authority to regard with the same fearless and immovable indifference, the stern countenance of the tyrant and the wicked ardour of the multitude, and who has learned from a yet higher and holier authority, to hold fast on "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, to abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good?" Believe me, however, this is no fancy picture. The original may be found in the world every day. Nor will it surprize those who have had occasion to

see how the vain heart is swoln, and the giddy head turned, how honesty of purpose and manliness of spirit, are perverted by popular applause. It is but the first step that costs. Once yield to the suggestion, that a little deceit or prevarication, a slight sacrifice of principle and independence, a compromise of conscience in matters not absolutely fundamental, may be excused, when the immediate gain is obvious and the end in view important, and the downward path becomes every day more and more smooth, until, in its descent, it reach the very abyss of vulgar, trading, intriguing, electioneering, office-hunting politicians. If in this lowest depth, a lower deep can be found, none of us, I am sure, have the curiosity to explore it.

But is Integrity sure to meet here its merited reward? Unquestionably not. If it were, and the fact generally known, there would scarcely be room for choice, and men would be honest from the want of a plausible temptation to be otherwise. But it is not too much to say, that, in general, Integrity has a tendency to promote the interest of him who pursues it, and it is therefore recommended to our adoption by prudence, not less than by principle. Success in the acquisition of any extrinsic object is necessarily uncertain, since it depends on contingencies which cannot be foreseen, and which if foreseen, are frequently beyond our power. It is not in mortals to command success. No talent, no courage, no industry, and no address, can be certain to effect it. But when it is attempted by cunning, disingenuous means, it is usually rendered more difficult of attainment, because of the complexity of the scheme, and the risk of detection and counteraction. Honesty, in the long run, is therefore the surer policy. It is impossible to thrive without the reputation of it, and it is far easier to be honest indeed, than to cheat the world into the belief of integrity, where it is not. The crooked stratagems, the arts, toils, concealments and self-denials, which are necessary to carry on a successful imposition, are far more onerous and painful, than all the duties which a life of probity enjoins; while the consciousness of an upright deportment, diffuses through the whole man, that security and serenity which infinitely outweigh all the advantages of successful cunning. Nor in recommending a spirit of Independence, is it intended to proscribe the acceptance of friendly aid, freely tendered, and won by no mean solicitation. Children of the same common family, we are bound to help each other in the trials and difficulties of our common pilgrimage, nor should we ever be too proud to receive from others that assistance, which it is our duty to render to them. Now such aid, is not only more likely to be bestowed, but comes with far greater effect, when there has been a manly and sustained effort to do without it. The spindling plant

which has always been supported by a prop, is not only unable to stand alone, but can scarcely be sustained by props when the season of fruit arrives; whereas, the slightest assistance then bestowed on the hardy tree, that self-sustained has always braved the breeze, will enable it to bear up under the heaviest and richest burthen. He who trusts to others, must necessarily be often disappointed, and the habit of dependence creates a helplessness which is almost incapable of exertion. Fancy dwells on expected aid, until it mistakes its own creations for realities, and the child of illusion wastes life in miserable day-dreams, unable to act for himself, and confidently relying on assistance which he is destined never to receive.

Deeply rooted principles of probity, confirmed habits of industry, and a determination to rely on one's own exertion, constitute then the great preparation for the discharge of the duties of man, and the best security for performing them with honor to one's self and benefit to others. But it may be asked, what is there in such a life of never ending toil, effort and privation, to recommend it to the acceptance of the young and the gay? Those who aspire to heroic renown, may indeed make up their minds to embrace these "hard doctrines;" but it may be well questioned, whether happiness is not preferable to greatness, and enjoyment more desirable than distinction. Let others, if they will, toil up "the steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar," we choose rather to sport in luxurious ease and careless glee in the valley below. It is, indeed, on those who aspire to eminence, that these injunctions are intended to be pressed with the greatest emphasis, not only because a failure in them would be more disastrous than in others, but because they are exposed to greater and more numerous dangers of error. But it is a sad mistake to suppose that they are not suited to all, and are not earnestly urged upon all, however humble their pretensions or moderate their views. Happiness, as well as greatness. enjoyment as well as renown, have no friends so sure as Integrity, Diligence and Independence. We are not placed here to waste our days in wanton riot or inglorious ease, with appetites perpetually gratified and never palled, exempted from all care and solicitude, with life ever fresh. and joys ever new. He who has fitted us for our condition, and assigned to us its appropriate duties, has not left his work unfinished, and omitted to provide a penalty for the neglect of our obligations. Labour is not more the duty, than the blessing of man. Without it, there is neither mental nor physical vigour, health, cheerfulness nor animation; neither the eagerness of hope, nor the capacity to enjoy. Every human being must have some object to engage his attention, excite his wishes, and rouse him to action, or he sinks, a prey to listless-

ness. For want of proper occupations, see strenuous idleness resorting to a thousand expedients—the race-course, the bottle, or the gaming-table, the frivolities of fashion, the debasements of sensuality, the petty contentions of envy, the grovelling pursuits of avarice, and all the various distracting agitations of vice. Call you these enjoyments? Is such the happiness which it is so dreadful to forego?

"Vast happiness enjoy thy gay allies!
"A youth of follies, an old age of cares,
"Young yet enervate, old yet never wise;
"Vice wastes their vigor and their mind impairs.
"Vain, idle, dissolute, in thoughtless ease,
"Reserving woes for age, their prime they spend;
"All wretched, hopeless to the evil days,
"With sorrow to the verge of life they tend;
"Grieved with the present, of the past ashamed;
"They live and are despised, they die, no more are named."

If to every bounty of Providence there be annexed, as assuredly there is, some obligation as a condition for its enjoyment; on us, blest as we have been, and as we now are, with the choicest gifts of Heaven here below—with freedom, peace, order, civilization and social virtue—then are unquestionably imposed weighty obligations. You whom I now address, will, in a few years, be among the men of the succeeding age. In a country like ours, where the public will is wholly unfettered, and every man is a component part of that country, there is no individual so humble who has not duties of a public kind to discharge. His views and actions have an influence on those of others, and his opinions, with theirs, serve to make up that public will. More especially is this the case with those who, whatever may be their pursuits in life, have been raised by education to a comparative superiority in intellectual vigor and attainments. On you, and such as you, depends the fate of the most precious heritage ever won by the valor, or preserved by the prudence, or consecrated by the virtue of an illustrious ancestry—illustrious, not because of factitious titles, but nature's nobles, wise, good, generous and brave! To you, and such as you, will be confided in deposit, the institutions of our renowned and beloved country. Receive them with awe, cherish them with loyalty, and transmit them whole, and if possible, improved to your children. Yours will, indeed, be no sinecure office. As the public will is the operative spring of all public action, it will be your duty to make and to keep the public will enlightened. There will always be some error to dispel, some prejudice to correct, some illusion to guard against, some imposition to detect and expose. In aid of these individual efforts, you must provide, by public institutions, for dif-

fusing among the people, that general information without which they cannot be protected from the machinations of deceivers. As your country grows in years, you must also cause it to grow in science, literature, arts and refinement. It will be for you to develope and multiply its resources, to check the faults of manners as they rise, and to advance the cause of industry, temperance, moderation, justice, morals and religion, all around you. On you too, will devolve the duty which has been too long neglected, but which cannot with impunity be neglected much longer, of providing for the mitigation, and (is it too much to hope for in North-Carolina?) for the ultimate extirpation of the worst evil that afflicts the Southern part of our Confederacy. Full well do you know to what I refer, for on this subject there is, with all of us, a morbid sensitiveness which gives warning even of an approach to it. Disguise the truth as we may, and throw the blame where we will, it is Slavery which, more than any other cause, keeps us back in the career of improvement. It stifles industry and represses enterprize—it is fatal to economy and providence—it discourages skill—impairs our strength as a community, and poisons morals at the fountain head. How this evil is to be encountered, how subdued, is indeed a difficult and delicate enquiry, which this is not the time to examine, nor the occasion to discuss. I felt, however, that I could not discharge my duty, without referring to this subject, as one which ought to engage the prudence, moderation and firmness of those who, sooner or later, must act decisively upon it.

I would not depress your buoyant spirits with gloomy anticipations, but I should be wanting in frankness, if I did not state my conviction that you will be called to the performance of other duties unusually grave and important. Perils surround you and are imminent, which will require clear heads, pure intentions, and stout hearts, to discern and to overcome. There is no side on which danger may not make its approach, but from the wickedness and madness of factions, it is most menacing. Time was, indeed, when factions contended amongst us with virulence and fury; but they were, or affected to be, at issue on questions of principle; now, Americans band together under the names of men, and wear the livery, and put on the badges of their leaders. Then, the individuals of the different parties were found side by side, dispersed throughout the various districts of our confederated Republic; but now, the parties that distract the land, are almost identified with our geographical distinctions. Now, there has come that period, foreseen and dreaded by our WASHINGTON, by him "who, more than any other individual, founded this our wide-spreading Empire, and gave to our western world independence and freedom"—by him, who with a father's warning-voice, bade us beware of

"parties founded on geographical discriminations." As yet, the sentiment so deeply planted in the hearts of our honest yeomanry, that union is strength, has not been uprooted. As yet, they acknowledge the truth, and feel the force of the homely, but excellent aphorism, "United we stand, divided we fall." As yet, they take pride in the name of "the United States"—in recollection of the fields that were won, the blood which was poured forth, and the glory which was gained in the common cause, and under the common banner of a united country. May God, in his mercy, forbid that I, or you, my friends, should live to see the day, when these sentiments and feelings shall be extinct! Whenever that day comes, then is the hour at hand, when this glorious Republic, this at once national and confederated Republic, which for nearly half a century has presented to the eyes, the hopes and the gratitude of man, a more brilliant and lovely image than Plato, or More, or Harrington, ever feigned or fancied, shall be like a tale that is told, like a vision that hath passed away. But these sentiments and feelings are necessarily weakened, and in the end must be destroyed, unless the moderate, the good and the wise united, "frown indignantly upon the first dawnings of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together its various parts." Threats of resistance, secession, separation—have become common as household words, in the wicked and silly violence of public declaimers. The public ear is familiarized, and the public mind will soon be accustomed, to the detestable suggestion of DISUNION! Calculations and conjectures, what may the East do without the South, and what may the South do without the East, sneers, menaces, reproaches, and recriminations, all tend to the same fatal end! What can the East do without the South? What can the South do without the East? They may do much; they may exhibit to the curiosity of political anatomists, and the pity and wonder of the world, the "*disjecta membra*," the sundered bleeding limbs of a once gigantic body instinct with life and strength and vigor. They can furnish to the philosophic historian, another melancholy and striking instance of the political axiom, that all Republican confederacies have an inherent and unavoidable tendency to dissolution. They will present fields and occasions for border wars, for leagues and counter-leagues, for the intrigues of petty statesmen, the struggles of military chiefs, for confiscations, insurrections, and deeds of darkest hue. They will gladden the hearts of those who have proclaimed, that men are not fit to govern themselves, and shed a disastrous eclipse on the hopes of rational freedom throughout the world. Solon, in his Code, proposed no punishment for parricide, treating it as an impossible crime. Such, with us, ought to be the crime of political parricide

—the dismemberment of our "father-land." "*Cari sunt parentes, cari sunt liberi, propinqui, familiares, sed omnes omnium caritates patria una complexa est; pro qua quis bonus dubitet mortem appetere si ei sit profuturus? Quo est detestabilior istorum immanitas qui lacerarunt scelere patriam, et in ea funditus delenda occupati et sunt et fuerunt.*"

If it must be so, let parties and party men continue to quarrel with little or no regard to the public good. They may mystify themselves and others with disputations on political economy, proving the most opposite doctrines to their own satisfaction, and perhaps, to the conviction of no one else on earth. They may deserve reprobation for their selfishness, their violence, their errors, or their wickedness. They may do our country much harm. They may retard its growth, destroy its harmony, impair its character, render its institutions unstable, pervert the public mind, and deprave the public morals. These are, indeed, evils, and sore evils, but the principle of life remains, and will yet struggle with assured success, over these temporary maladies. Still we are great, glorious, united and free; still we have a name that is revered abroad and loved at home—a name which is a tower of strength to us against foreign wrong, and a bond of internal union and harmony—a name, which no enemy pronounces but with respect, and which no citizen hears, but with a throb of exultation. Still we have that blessed Constitution, which, with all its pretended defects, and all its alleged violations, has conferred more benefit on man, than ever yet flowed from any other human institution—which has established justice, insured domestic tranquillity, provided for the common defence, promoted the general welfare, and which, under God, if we be true to ourselves, will insure the blessings of Liberty to us and our posterity.

Surely, such a Country, and such a Constitution, have claims upon you, my friends, which cannot be disregarded. I entreat and adjure you then, by all that is near and dear to you on earth, by all the obligations of Patriotism, by the memory of your fathers, who fell in the great and glorious struggle, for the sake of your sons whom you would not have to blush for your degeneracy, by all your proud recollections of the past, and all your fond anticipations of the future renown of our nation—preserve that Country, uphold that Constitution. Resolve, that they shall not be lost while in your keeping, and may God Almighty strengthen you to perform that vow!